



# **STABILIZATION IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA INSIGHTS FROM SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN AND THE DRC**

# **Stabilization in Eastern and Central Africa**

Insights from Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC



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#### **THE STABILIZATION CONFERENCE**

In March 2014, the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), through the Rift Valley Forum, together with the University of Gothenburg convened a regional conference on stabilization at the Kenya School of Government in Nairobi. The objective of the two-day conference was to question, review, evaluate, and exchange lessons on stabilization programmes in the DRC, Somalia and South Sudan with the aim of informing policies that enhance peace and security in eastern and central Africa.

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Cover: A member of the Force Intervention Brigade inside an armoured vehicle during patrol near Beni in the eastern DRC.

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## Introduction

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Over the last ten years, the concept of ‘stabilization’ has been added to the lexicon of post-conflict reconstruction and development. For several European donor countries, the United States and multilateral institutions, stability or stabilization frameworks, programmes and missions have become a core element in response to violent conflict and other harbingers of state fragility. Over time, stabilization has become a buzzword in multiple contexts, often in disregard of its original meaning. This can cause confusion not only for outside observers, but also for policymakers, practitioners and those who are supposed to benefit from stabilization programmes.

In March 2014, the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), through the Rift Valley Forum—then the Nairobi Forum—together with the University of Gothenburg convened a regional conference on stabilization at the Kenya School of Government in Nairobi. The conference, ‘Stabilization in Eastern and Central Africa: History, theory, policy and practice under scrutiny’, attracted some ninety participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia and South Sudan—people involved in civil society, government, the UN and the donor and diplomatic communities. Academics and specialists from Europe and North America also participated.

The objective of the two-day conference was to question, review, evaluate and exchange lessons on stabilization programmes in the DRC, Somalia and South Sudan with the aim of informing policies that enhance peace and security in eastern and central Africa. Discussions were structured around four themes: the history, theory and policies of stabilization operations; links between stabilization and security; stabilization in the context of peace frameworks and political settlements; and issues that arise when stabilization and development programmes meet.

This report presents highlights from this gathering and in no way aims to reproduce the debates and their conclusions in full. Giving space to voices from countries that are subject to stabilization programmes is central to this report. Their statements, explanations and clarifications are complemented here by those of regional and international specialists and experienced practitioners in international aid, development and stabilization.

The report does not provide a single answer or set of policy recommendations to the several issues touched upon. Rather, contrasting and sometimes contradictory perspectives stand at its heart. In that way, it is hoped, the text can be read as an active dialogue between multiple voices from the three sub-regions and beyond. One comment, sent to RVI after the event, exemplifies the critical nature of the event and the need for further debate:

The securitization/militarization of international aid and peacemaking efforts was treated at the conference as a mere technical and thus neutral exercise (and as such well within the approach of stabilization). The fact that stabilization undermines a generation or more of liberal values and efforts to keep both the military and military thinking apart from international aid was passed over at the conference in a far too cavalier manner. I hope the subject can be revisited, but take the form of a debate in which the many dimensions of this very controversial practice can be seriously examined (and hopefully rejected).

The report's structure is organized along themes, rather than the individual debates as they occurred during the conference. Every effort has been made to reflect the viewpoints of the speakers. All those quoted are speaking on their own behalf, presenting their personal opinions and views, not those of their respective organizations. Each quote has been verified with and approved by the speaker. Some remain anonymous at the speakers' request. Any errors that remain are the sole responsibility of the editors.

This record relies on two main sources for documentation. Firstly, more than eight hours of audio recordings from the two days of discussion in the main conference room. Secondly, more than fifty pages of notes taken during breakout groups by four conference rapporteurs—Amina Abdulkadir, Willy Buloso, Moses Karanja and David Wagacha. Their work was coordinated and compiled by Elizabeth Spackman. RVI is grateful for their relentless focus and energy. A special thank you is owed to conference facilitators Mark Bradbury, Nuur Mohamud Sheekh and Philip Gourdin, to Ndanu Mung'ala, Sylvia Kitema and Charles Kyale for their logistical support, as well as to Daniel Watkins and Michel Thill for transcription and compiling this report from its sources.

Extracts from a background paper prepared for the conference by co-convenors Jan Bachmann and Peer Schouten from

the University of Gothenburg have been included in text boxes to complement the speakers' voices. The conference was in English with simultaneous translation into French. The editors have translated all French quotes into English.



## 1. Setting the scene: Stabilization for beginners

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*A pessimist is an experienced optimist.*

— Fred Ngoga

### Fred Ngoga

The other day, I was flying to Nairobi from Mogadishu, and as we were about to stop at Wajir, the pilot told us to buckle up. When he said that, when he said to buckle up because it gets very bumpy, I thought to myself, ‘My God, we live in turbulent times!’

These are times where on the one hand, we have so many opportunities, and a lot of good things are happening, but at the same time, there are a lot of crises in the world. This region of ours is one that is on the one hand seeing high growth rates, regional investment, and the peaceful transition of power in many countries, but on the other hand civil wars in countries like Somalia, Central African Republic, South Sudan, and to some extent, the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well. And even more worrisome, the countries that have recently emerged from civil war are at risk of reverting back to turmoil.

### Ken Menkhaus

You can’t help but feel the burden of history in a conversation like this. We’re working on three countries here—the DRC, Somalia, South Sudan—that have had some of the longest-running and worst crises in the world over the past 50 years. A lot of blood has been spilt, and the fact that it has been so difficult to make progress—the fact that there has been so big a failure, blamed across the board—international actors, local actors, national government—is a heavy burden.

But as we listen to these three cases, it’s also a reminder of the extraordinary degree of difficulty that actors face in trying to make these crises right, trying to fix them in a context where we’ve had protracted crises that have been going on now in some cases for 15, 20 years or more.

Protracted conflicts have their own pathologies; they create their own adaptations. Everyone adapts to the new realities. These

## Background

International responses to violent conflict during the 1990s, for example in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Haiti and Rwanda, exposed a general lack of civilian expertise for post-conflict situations and the need for peacekeepers to operate—both when there was a peace to keep and during conflict. As early as 1992, the European Union started to spearhead increased coordination of civilian and military efforts within international humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

In the aftermath of 9/11, however, greater coordination and coherence between development agencies, diplomacy and military units was said to be necessary in the context of fragile states, eventually resulting in ‘comprehensive’ or ‘whole-of-government’ approaches. The line of argument is that addressing the unique problems in different contexts of fragility, from Afghanistan to Haiti, requires a broad repertoire of instruments: hard and soft; civilian and military; short-term security and long-term economic development.

The coordination of civilian and military actors is the primary element of all stabilization frameworks. Arguably, however, the turning point in stabilization policy was the US military’s realization in Iraq and Afghanistan of the need to combine, as a second element, short-term coercive pacification and long-term capacity-building and peace-building—simultaneously. Much of current understanding and practice in stabilization was developed during the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These include joint civil–military teams, military units engaged in infrastructure rehabilitation in order to ‘win hearts and minds’, and joint funding mechanisms.

In the last decade, however, stability or stabilization frameworks and missions have mushroomed in Western responses to armed conflicts and state fragility. The UN, the United States, the UK, Denmark, Australia and the Netherlands have all institutionalized their stabilization policies in the form of inter-departmental stabilization units and task forces, and in some cases inter-agency funding pools to pay for conflict prevention or crisis response. In addition, multi-lateral peacekeeping missions apply stabilization approaches in each of these contexts.

adaptations can create systems, systems in which livelihoods are made, food is produced, trade is brokered, systems of politics, systems of international response. Along with those systems, over time, comes a political culture that can be quite resistant to change.



### Philip Winter

I started my career in Africa in 1975, in what was then Southern Sudan. I decided to write down some of the nostrums that I've lived through and bumped up against to give you an idea that 'stabilization' is a relatively recent aspiration of the international community and is something exogenous.

I wrote down, off the top of my head, with no research, no notes: stages of growth, economic take-off, export-led growth, basic needs, integrated rural development, rights-based programming, do-no-harm, capacity-building, stabilization, protection, conflict drivers and conflict advisers. We've all bumped into these concepts. We've all met people who tell us they are conflict analysts, or conflict advisers, and we are entitled to be sceptical—because these are exogenous, externally driven responses to internal crises of governance.

The international community, when it gets involved in a 'complex emergency', likes to bring its recipes, its nostrums if you like—protection of civilians, stabilization, whatever—into the picture. And it operates in ways that may not be at all informed by the way local people operate. So whilst there are many people who learnt a lot from South Sudan, you can't expect new relief workers or peacekeepers to understand the environment they're operating in, and the result is that they don't.

### Mvemba Dizolele



History is important. As an example, let's take SSR [security sector reform]. If your narrative says, 'The Congo has never had an army, and it has always been this way', then whatever half-baked solution you bring is going to seem good to you. You say to yourself, 'Because nothing has ever worked here, this is good!' But if you say, 'Well, Congo did have an army. Zaire used to have an army. Zaire used to have a very strong air force. It was Zaire that helped the US in Angola. It was Zaire that stopped Qaddafi in Chad. What happened to that military?'—if you start thinking about it—you won't talk about your ideas for SSR. Historically, there have been plenty of bilateral military co-operations. What happened to that? Rather than come in with whatever solution you want, it behoves us to go back and see.

## 2. Stabilization in theory

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*I came to this conference with a considerable amount of confusion as to what stabilization is and was, and I guess I was partly reassured when, as I was discussing it with a group of South Sudanese yesterday, everybody in the group was equally as confused as I was.*

— John Young



### *From the academy*

#### **Ken Menkhaus**

We all know that academics love to take apart concepts. We deconstruct them, we unpack them, and we problematize them. When it goes wrong, it turns into an internal parlour game to see who's the cleverest person to play semantics. But when it's done right, this exercise has three really important advantages: clarity, precision, and revelation.

We have been talking about compatibility versus trade-offs for 50 or 60 years. Yet in those instances where we have two goods that appear to collide, often we have come up with a new concept that actually helps us get past the apparent impasse. In the 1970s and 1980s, we had an apparent impasse between two goods—environmental protection and economic development—and they seemed to be at complete loggerheads. There was a trade-off: if you want economic growth and development, it comes at a cost for the environment.

Well, we worked on it, and we worked on it in lots of workshops like this, and the world came up with the concept of sustainable development: if you can't pass on development from one generation to the next, because you are undermining the environment, it is not development. That reframed the entire relationship between these two goods in a very constructive way.

Could we pull that off with some of the goods in stabilization? Can we find a new way to think about some of these goals and objectives, which sometimes appear in the field to collide with one another, to advance the overall objective of stabilization, which as we know, is to create an environment in post-war settings where

populations can enjoy security and order and justice and economic development and governance?

### Judith Verweijen

The discussions that take place today around stabilization remind me of a classic article by Giovanni Sartori from 1970 called 'Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics'. In 1970, Sartori said, I quote,

#### Background

Given the connotations of the term 'stability' during the Cold War, the recent rise of the concept of stabilization operations is surprising. Generally speaking, stabilization frameworks evolved within the discussion on the links between security and development. The notion that security and development are interlinked, and therefore have to be thought of and acted upon together, has shaped foreign policy towards Africa since the mid-1990s.

Two developments within the security–development nexus are of particular interest to understanding the rise of stabilization as a concept. First, the emphasis on 1990s development policy on post-conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention; and second, the call for closer civil–military coordination within peacekeeping missions.

Unsurprisingly, an analysis of different approaches to stabilization presents an ambiguous picture of the concept. While some actors, such as Denmark or the UK, initially saw the concept as stopping short of state-building, others, such as the UN and European Union, avoided deeper engagement. For a number of countries, including the United States and the UK, stabilization provided a platform for building up domestic civilian expertise as well as civil–military coordination mechanisms for post-conflict settings. In the meantime, the concept evolved to denote an abundance of different types of intervention, including counter-insurgency, early recovery, reconstruction, peace-building, and state-building.

Policy documents on stabilization argue that there can be no one-size-fits-all solution to prevent or resolve conflict. Stabilization arguably provides the flexibility to address a number of security and development issues. The British military put it aptly: 'Stabilization is a creative process, not a science'.

\* Ministry of Defence, *Security and Stabilisation: The Military's Contribution*, Joint Publication Doctrine 3-40, Swindon, Wiltshire: Ministry of Defence, 2009, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/49948/jdp3\\_40a4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49948/jdp3_40a4.pdf).

The larger the world, the more we have resorted to conceptual stretching or conceptual straining—that is, to vague, amorphous conceptualizations. To be sure, there is more to it: One may add, for example, that conceptual stretching also represents a deliberate attempt to make our conceptualizations ‘value-free’. These considerations notwithstanding, the net result of conceptual straining is that our gains in extensional coverage tend to be matched by loss in connotative precision. It appears that we can cover more only by saying less, and by saying less in a far less precise manner.<sup>1</sup>

Somehow I thought it very striking to apply Sartori’s concept of conceptual stretching to the semantic confusions around stabilization. And there’s an idea also from Arturo Escobar that he sets out in ‘Encountering Development’, where he explains how the ‘development discourse’ needs to constantly reinvent itself discursively.<sup>2</sup> So, according to him, whether it’s called ‘development’ or ‘stabilization’, there’s always a need for some sort of reinvention in order to mask the constant failures of all these efforts to actually change things on the ground.

1 Giovanni Sartori, ‘Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics’, *American Political Science Review* 64/4 (1970), 1033–53 (1034).

2 Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

3 United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo, Stabilization Support Unit, ‘International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy 2013–2017: Executive Summary’, 28 October 2013.

## In the field

### Background

There is an extreme diversity of approaches, goals, instruments, and projects gathered under the heading of ‘stabilization’. As such, practice mirrors the conceptual variety—or the indeterminate nature—of stabilization.

Interestingly, a number of states and institutions running large programmes under the label ‘stabilization’ do not offer a definition of the term. In the case of the UN, other than in the name of its stabilization missions, the term is rarely mentioned in official documents and its meaning is ambiguous at best.

### Hugo de Vries

If you think that there is no strategy for stabilization, please read the revised I4S, the revised stabilization framework.<sup>3</sup> We spent a year with the government and everybody revising it.





## Emily Paddon

According to the new plan [the I4S], stabilization is to be, I quote, ‘an integrated, holistic but targeted process of enabling state and society to build mutual accountability and capacity to address and mitigate existing or emerging drivers of violent conflict, creating the conditions for improved governance and longer term development’.<sup>4</sup>



## Anonymous

In Somalia, AMISOM is the only security enabler at the moment. It’s the only actor that can provide any form of security in Somalia. Does it make sense to push stabilization per se? In Somalia, it’s part of a larger discourse, which is the New Deal,<sup>5</sup> which at the moment is very much on paper and not a reality. But probably this is the trend we should look at: not to perpetrate stabilization discourse per se, but to integrate it into much larger priorities for the country.’

### Background

I4S and STAREC, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, comprise the most elaborate and explicit example of international stabilization. Their approach is to restore state authority in the conflict-afflicted eastern provinces of the DRC by building infrastructure and deploying state agents, complemented by UN-supported efforts of the Congolese army (FARDC) to disarm rebels.

Stabilization efforts in the DRC are, however, marked by some challenges: persistent conflict, poor local perceptions, and the technical focus and fragmentation of the international agenda. Donors tend to invest only in one-time community support efforts. Stabilization has not been applied in South Sudan, if by stabilization one means holistic approaches combining security on a political level with longer-term investments.

<sup>4</sup> MONUSCO, ‘International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy 2013–2017’.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Republic of Somalia, ‘The Somali Compact’, Mogadishu, 2013.

## *Is everyone on the same page?*

### Ken Menkhaus

What we are doing is looking at the different components of what we have come to call stabilization, development, state-building,

peace-building, military peace enforcement, etc. We are looking at how all of them interact with one another. In stabilization, we've got a lot of new tools at our disposal. We are equipped with tools and concepts, processes and strategies, that we would have loved to have had in 1992/93 in South Sudan or Somalia. It's impressive. But one also gets the impression that much as we did in UNOSOM in 1993, we're still kind of making it up as we go along.

### **Anonymous**

I just would like to ask whether it's important or necessary to educate mainstream people about the concept of stabilization? In South Sudan, all we know is humanitarian relief and development assistance. Anything that has been built, whether it's a clinic or it's infrastructure through the stabilization programme, they call development assistance or humanitarian relief, something like that.

### **Emily Paddon**

In 2011 and 2012, I led a series of focus groups in South Kivu and North Kivu, with different communities, where we talked about stabilization and what it meant. What became clear was that it had come to mean very different things to different people. There was a lot of misunderstanding and confusion amongst communities. One member of civil society even referred to it in derogatory terms, as a 'gros mot' or 'swear word'. International actors were similarly confused about its meaning, and different interpretations persisted amongst humanitarians, donors, and the different components of the UN mission.

### *Politically useful, intentionally vague*

### **Stuart Gordon**

Stabilization presented some really useful concepts to government ministries in the UK, USA, and elsewhere. It provided a rallying point around which careers could be developed, and it echoed agendas, particularly those of the UK, to horizontally link up development and the military.

There also needed to be a political context in which humanitarianism was set. The absence of a political framework in which humanitarianism was instrumentalized to deliver political effects



was a problem. Where does humanitarianism sit? What are these responses of development and diplomatic actors?

Stabilization thus became a rallying point for different elements and interests. Events created a pressure to push towards a more joined-up agenda; the contents from very different government departments were brought together—institutional capacity building, political settlements, security sector reform, service delivery, building state legitimacy, governance, which really came from the development community looking at fragile states, and hearts and minds, which came from military agendas.

But I think such a vague term is dangerous—such an all-encompassing term—because it means that everything that can demonstrate that it has some relevance towards stabilization, broadly defined, can be legitimized and justified. And it impacts most definitely on prioritization and sequencing activities. There's a finite amount of money, there's a finite amount of policymakers' time.

There was a lot of talk in the early days of stabilization planning about creating 'critical paths towards stability', trying to prioritize certain actions and putting them in a certain sequence in order to deliver the conditions under which other forms of development could take place. The danger is, if you say that everything falls under the 'emergency stabilization phase', and everything is equally relevant, it absorbs time, it absorbs the money available, and it muddies the policy picture about what you need to do first.

What we have created is a set of institutions for people with certain skill sets that need to demonstrate relevance to the concept of stabilization rather than, necessarily, relevance to the critical path to stability for the state that they're dealing with.

### Hugo de Vries



What we have seen over the years in Congo is that the more vague you keep such a concept, the easier it is for agencies, NGOs, etc., to sell a project as being 'stabilization' while doing exactly the same thing they would have done in any other circumstances, calling it 'state authority' or 'early recovery' or whatever. So there's a financial incentive behind that as well. We need to be careful not to dilute the concept of stabilization too much by adding everything to it, and end up with it being nothing.

## Joanna Nickolls

It's difficult to define whether things count as humanitarian or if they count as early recovery or if they count as stabilization. So if we have an ECHO-funded health clinic in an area with high death rates, that can count as humanitarian. If a similar intervention with a similar health clinic is funded by the stability fund and is labelled as linked to the government, that can count as stabilization. The definitions are, whilst in theory quite clear, in practice quite hazy.



## Emily Paddon

Stabilization is a concept that has increased in popularity in part because it helps make sense, or it gives the impression of making sense, of a complex landscape. It aims to focus priorities and to provide a funding structure and coordination mechanism, all of which are needed to engage in the particular contexts in which it's now so prevalent as a concept.

It is not an entirely new concept, as others have stated. There is a recycling of the organizing concepts and frameworks that are used by international actors. However, I think it is important to recognize that the scale of ambition and the types of projects being pursued today by international actors are different than 10 or 15 years ago.

## Anna Schmidt

The story goes that the UN was asked by the Somali government to provide a list of its stabilization activities, but got a bit stuck because of different interests in labelling something stabilization—some did not want to have an activity they were doing to be called 'stabilization'—so in the end, there was a list of what people were doing in specific areas so the government could make up its own mind on how to classify them.



## *From the ground up*

## Anonymous

I find it ironic that we are sitting here talking about the failures of the international system, recognizing the need to integrate local voices, or rather, consult local voices. And yet I feel like South Sudan is being sidelined in this discussion. If you look at the voices



speaking, there is only one South Sudanese. The rest are people from the international so-called experts.

I find it really offensive that we would be talking here about South Sudan when we have in the audience capable South Sudanese who can articulate some of these issues. Why were we called to come and listen to the experts? I should have not wasted my time to come from Addis yesterday to listen to this, especially when we are being hypocritical: we are criticizing the same practices that we are engaged in right now.



### **Abdirashid Hashi**

The paper talks about the Danish and the Norwegians and the British and the EU. And yet Somalia is a country. It has a people. They have ideas, they have values, they have skills. They have stabilization efforts in Somaliland and Puntland. We have stability there! We could have held this conference in Hargeysa!

### **Anonymous**

Stabilization is a word that animates the donor community, but it's not in the Sudanese lexicon.



### **Emmanuel Kabengele**

One can feel it is a bit as if the voices of the communities are not listened to sufficiently by I4S.

### **Geoffrey Lou Duke**

Context is king. Not only at the national level, but at the local level. To me, that means that we have to rethink our design of development and stabilization strategies. It has to begin from below and then come up and connect the various dynamics.

### **William Deng Deng**

One of my colleagues said, 'We don't mind expertise from outside. But please send us expertise with experience'. Don't send 24-year-old kids to advise sixty-year-old men. There's something fundamentally wrong with that.

Personally, I compare stabilization to structural adjustment. I was going to primary school in Kenya when structural adjustment



was just coming in, and Kenya went through it horribly, along with many others. Their economies today, how do they fare?

Now, you talk about stabilization and a New Deal. How different is that? Somebody sits somewhere and decides how I am supposed to be feeling. How does that work? I'm supposed to be the one that tells you that I'm feeling this way, then we investigate it, and we work together.

### **Mvemba Dizolele**

People challenge the notion of stabilization programmes, whether it is humanitarian or military missions, because they feel that the programmes are Western responses to their crises. What people are calling for is their own solution to their crisis, because they understand their crisis better. People across these regions are ready to assert their own right to self-determination, and this is really key.

### 3. Stabilization and politics

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*Each different interpretation of stabilization is based on a different reading of the causes of violence in a certain context.*

— Judith Verweijen

#### *The first 500 years*

##### **Joanna Nickolls**

According to a recent study, the fastest political transformations take a generation. If you look at the time it takes to get corruption under control, it's 27 years.<sup>6</sup> That's under reasonable control, not to eliminate it. Arguably some of our international time frames are significantly shorter than that. We have diplomats, aid workers, who have a three-to-five-year, maybe ten-year horizon in which they want to deliver change. There is not much international incentive structured around beginning a project that might reap benefits in 27 years.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2011, 2 and 108. Accessed 5 January 2016, [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011\\_Full\\_Text.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf).

##### **Ken Menkhaus**

Political science doesn't have a whole lot to offer by way of laws of nature or findings that are ironclad. But one of the things that political science research has proven pretty conclusively is that political institutionalization takes a long time. I was at a conference not long ago where a wag from Harvard said, 'The hard part of state-building is really the first 500 years.'



##### **Background**

There is an increasing state focus in the stabilization approaches to Somalia. This seems due to improved international trust in the Federal Government of Somalia, which, however, remains a structure entirely dependent on international funding, support, and security. There is a real challenge—which remains—in establishing a central state while navigating and engaging local authorities, who might be pivotal for access but who at the same time might also become spoilers.

## Anonymous

In South Sudan, local justice, local security, seem to work at the local state level because people in power have been there for over 50 years, and continuity is what they believe to work. They know what can work. Institutional memory should be carried forward if we are to have a stable country.



## Anonymous

South Sudan has 11 constitutions: there is a national constitution and ten state constitutions. But there is no judiciary in these states. So we have ten states with ten constitutions, but with no judiciary as a third arm of the government. This means the eleven constitutions will have to be interpreted by the national judiciary, which by and large sits in Juba and does not reach the population.

## William Deng Deng

In South Sudan, we have not studied what skills we need to run a state. Yes, we were a very effective, struggling liberation movement, but can we really run a state? This has not been looked at. It was pushed aside, and we said, 'Oh, we'll have stabilization, we'll put in money', but when they see the money, that's it.

We, as a government, must be able to sit with our own communities and face our own truth and reconciliation, because some of us made mistakes. But we have not done that. We have not apologized to our people.

## Judith Verweijen

We have referred to the security–development nexus, but I do also wonder if the roots of the idea that security and development are connected are much older? If we look at colonial policy, and especially if we look at early counter-insurgency interventions, some people say that development was born in the context of counter-insurgency, actually, referring to the Mau Mau campaigns of the British in Kenya.

## Mvemba Dizolele

If you are around for 15 years, to the tune of USD 1.5 billion, and your 15-page mandate covers everything from elections to training to everything, you are trying to substitute for the state. You either



have to take full responsibility for that, or you will have to start exiting so the state can do its work.

### Judith Verweijen

You hear a lot of contradictions. On the one hand, we are too state centred; we should focus on non-state actors. On the other hand, every time, what comes up is constitutions, legal frameworks, and everything for which you actually need a strong state. So somehow, are we trapped in the state straitjacket in our thinking? Or is there simply not a viable way to conceptualize political order outside of the state? It's an open question.

### *Intervention as politics*

### Emmanuel Kabengele

We think there is a very obvious link between politics and the aspects of stabilization.



### Fred Ngoga

Building an army is a political endeavour. You cannot build an army unless you have your politics right. In the case of Somalia, you have the issue of federalism first before you can set up your Somali armed forces. Today the reality is, we have 20,000 forces we have built up so far in Somalia. But these forces still act like clan militias because of issues related to federalism and political representation.

### Stuart Gordon

Stabilization legitimizes a certain toolbox from the international community, and it mobilizes responses around those. And what that leads to, essentially, is a technical set of solutions to problems that are actually political and essentially local. Ultimately, all crises are local. The local matters.



### Judith Verweijen

I coined the concept 'rebels in suits', because often we have the idea that rebels are only the military guys with the guns. However, what we see in the Congo is that there is a whole apparatus of

civilian actors—provincial MPs, etc.—who support armed groups directly or indirectly.

### Emily Paddon

International stabilization policies and practices do not exist in a vacuum. Peacekeepers as well as other international actors are parties and agents to the conflict that they are engaging in. They influence dynamics and the course of events in various ways even when they are inconsistent in implementing those policies. They raise expectations and create incentives amongst the local actors, and in doing so they encourage particular types of behaviour that would not have occurred otherwise.

Civilians who are told that they are going to be protected make decisions based on that basis. Similarly, armed actors, and particularly state actors, respond to the constraints and opportunities afforded by stabilization plans as well as other international policies. For those seeking a continuation of conflict, stabilization may have considerable political and strategic consequences, and they respond to that. They may be attacked, they may be marginalized by future peace or political processes, they may be sanctioned by the Security Council, and in some cases, they may be investigated by the ICC. Given these stakes, they respond. They change their behaviour based on that.

I think the laudable aims underpinning international efforts in Congo and elsewhere, that which motivates many of us in this room today—things like security, protection, statebuilding—are important. They really matter, and they should continue to inform the ways in which we engage, but I don't think we can talk about stabilization in apolitical terms. It's inherently political, and in my view, we have to start with that.

### *Uninvited intervention*

#### Anonymous

Looking at developments during 2005, soon after the formation of the first transitional federal government [in Somalia], we had the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA), jointly done by the World Bank and UNDP, which resulted in the production of the Somali Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which in Hargeysa was more of a framework than a programme. The New Deal seems to





be deriving from Norway, Brussels, not even from Mogadishu. If we have the RDP, why not do another JNA, update that document, and use that? It was more Somali than the New Deal.

### Edward Rackley

Even those that claim political neutrality and impartiality, they also become, by their very presence, actors in a theatre. They have effects; some of them are perverse, some of them are positive. Does that mean incompatibility? In the spirit of prudence and humility, are we the right actors? Us in the room, are we the right type of actors to be delivering stability?

### Ken Menkhaus

In Somalia [in 1992], we were going in uninvited to a place—where there was no state to invite us in the first place—to try to impose peace. I was there at the time. I can assure you: we were making it up as we were going along. There were no rules. We had to set a precedent with virtually every decision that was being made in a context where we had very few people who knew much about the country.

The longer the presence of foreign troops in Somalia, the more local resistance and unhappiness. This is not just true in Somalia but everywhere in the world.

Almost everywhere that the international community intervenes, we [the international community] are often more of a problem than a solution. Everywhere. And I think we need to take that as a given. One needs to operate on the assumption that the international community, writ large—not just the UN and the Western donors—but all of the international actors who have their fingers in your problem are just a given. And you are going to have to work through it despite, not because of, but despite, us. If you can take that approach, it will allow you to move on instead of constantly trying to get us to do better.

Neutrality and impartiality in a stabilization mission are very difficult to achieve. Almost every decision you make harms some interests and helps others. I don't know that the international community can do a whole lot better than it is doing now. It's a big improvement over 20 years ago.

Whether we are governments in the region, national or local, international aid, or diplomats, we often fashion stabilization projects, programmes, and strategies forgetting that locals have

agency. Whatever we do is going to create conditions and incentives that people locally will react to. Not only do they have agency, but they are playing on their home field. We are playing checkers, and they are playing chess. I think a lot of the time when stabilization fails, it is because we fail to account for the simple fact that people locally will react and adapt to whatever we are doing.

### Anonymous

People believe these people [AMISOM] are here for their own interests. The majority of Somalis believe this. And the background to what I am saying is, each AU [African Union] troop earns about USD 2000–3,000 a month. They are in a big mechanized vehicle. Somalis earn USD 100 a month. If they get sick, they earn nothing. Sometimes for three months, they do not get paid. So tell me, given this background, with all the money spent on AU troops, and nothing to Somalis, how will we achieve security in Somalia? Can these troops stay forever?



### Fred Ngoga

Even your brother, when he comes to stay on your couch—one day is good, two days is okay, three days, you want to invite him to leave. We appreciate that; we understand that. But please do understand we [peacekeepers] have a job to do. We are not doing it for ourselves or for that money

### Abdirashid Hashi

In the past 20 years, the international community has been one of the biggest actors in the Somali situation. The failure and the fragility we see now is a collective problem. It's a collective failure. Maybe it was the Somalis' omission. Maybe we failed to take responsibility and fix our country.

### Anonymous

In the DRC, where most of my experience is, that same impression is really widespread as well among the Congolese—that this mission [MONUSCO] is just a money-eating machine, and what they're doing is not really anything.





### William Deng Deng

With the regional powers intervening in South Sudan, I use the phrase the ‘two Ps’: passivity and panic. Right now, the regional powers are panicking. I have been coming here, to Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, and I have been saying, ‘The things you are ignoring will blow up in our faces’. And they said, ‘Oh, you’re being too critical’. And yet, eventually it did blow up in our faces. These are things we could have addressed in 2006, 2007, and 2008. But the international community, you can’t discern where they stand. You can’t discern their interests.



### Judith Verweijen

The competition between elites takes place at local, national, and regional levels, and there is a constant interaction with these levels of conflict dynamics. This makes it really difficult to intervene. Even if Kigali and Kinshasa get their act together, there remains at the local level a whole host of issues that spiral out of control. By contrast, if you only intervene at the local level, and work on community reconciliation, there is a real risk that, for example, national elites will continue to mobilize violently. So a real challenge is what is the appropriate level of intervention in DRC?

## 4. Stabilization and security

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*A friend told me that to better stabilize, one first has to destabilize.*

— Rémy Kasindi

### *Democratic Republic of the Congo*

#### Emily Paddon

Whilst halting armed group activity, building up local capacities and fostering dialogue is important, for stabilization to be lasting and real, national institutions will have to be reformed in the Congo. And the underlying political issues, which are local, national and regional, will have to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

However, time and time again, the government and the parties on the ground have done little to indicate a genuine willingness to pursue reform. Without such reforms, I think we must ask the hard questions of what continuing to support the state is actually delivering and the real effects it has on the prospects of long-term stability in Congo.



#### Loochi Muzaliwa

I think that we talk too much as if we're in the church sometimes, with all the best intentions in the world, but we still do not manage to touch on the interests of the parties [donors]. But, what about the interests of the parties? Why are all these states giving millions of dollars? It is true that some are looking for their own stability. Nobody has an interest in a burning Congo, for example, otherwise one would not have access to its resources.

In the Congo, we have all these debates around mineral resources, the protection of forests, the management of water, of the Inga Dam, etc. If South Africa is there, it is not because South Africa loves the Congo, but because South Africa is looking for the energy that will come from Inga III. So I think that if we like to speak of stabilization, we should take into account all these interests of different states.



## Hugo de Vries

There is a little bit of confusion about this concept of ‘island of stability’, which has popped up. Islands of stability are basically quick impact projects. They are not linked to a broader theory of stabilization. They are basically showing the flag right after operations, but because we call them islands of stability, there is a certain confusion with broader stabilization, and that is becoming a big problem.

## Emily Paddon

I take issue with this idea of ‘islands of stability’. They are temporary solutions, and they are geographically discrete. What happens outside those islands? What is to say that the conflict will not be displaced, as it has in the past?

Operationalization of these plans has centred largely on a counter-insurgency model of clear-hold-build, whereby targeted clearing operations are conducted by the intervention brigade and/or the FARDC [spell out]. Once freed from armed groups, the mission, as well as other international and national actors, are then tasked with providing rapid support to hold and build within the area, coordinated under the I4S.

## Judith Verweijen

In Congo, there is the dilemma of where are you going to intervene. There is a vast area wherein armed mobilization takes place, ranging from North Katanga to Haute Uele, where the LRA is active. There are simply not the military or financial resources to intervene in all of these places at the same time, so you must prioritize. What rebel groups are you going to attack or deal with first? Where are you going to work?

However, in this case, if you choose a strategy that focuses on specific areas, there is the risk of creating security vacuums. When you start military operations in a certain place, troops are withdrawn from another area, creating a vacuum that other groups jump into. We have seen this with the expansion of Raia Mutomboki in 2011, which profited from the absence of the Congolese army.

## Somalia

### Ken Menkhaus

I would like to begin by asking the question, Whose security are we talking about? Because depending on how you answer that question, you come up with very different policy problems. Is it the security of global and regional actors? Is it the security of the Somali state and government? Or is it the security of the Somali people?

If what we do in Somalia does not improve or protect the security of the Somali people, then we really shouldn't be there in the first place. And we must not assume that stabilization is a goal that is shared by everyone. There are war economies. There are populations, there are elites, again both locally and internationally, that embrace stabilization as a project, not as a goal.

The introduction of resources in Somalia of any type is a conflict-producing exercise. Somali communities, Somali elites will engage in conflict over these resources to the extent that almost everything we talked about that falls under the rubric of stabilization is an introduction of resources. We could conclude that stabilization exercises ironically produce the very conflict that we are hoping to control. This is inevitable, but it can be controlled, with good local contexts, with good national officers and project development, and humanitarian aid, state-building aid. These can produce controllable conflict. There is nothing wrong with conflict. Our problem in Somalia is when it spills over into armed conflict.

Somaliland, which has remained peaceful for most of the last 23 years, has existed on a federal budget until recently of about USD 50 million a year. It was not a lot to fight over. The stakes were lower, they could work it out. When you introduce bigger resources, you introduce the risk of much fiercer political conflict.

Foreign military intervention, which dominates the political landscape in Somalia today, can successfully protect the Somali government on most days and international organizations and their staff on most days. But not the Somali people. The key counter-insurgency actors on the international level are inadvertently, for short-term reasons, undermining the state-building agenda, which is to build command and control over the security forces.

Most of the stabilization operations that we [as observers] have worked with around the world have either been [in the



context of] a victor's peace—where one side comes in, they win, the others lose, and they impose the new rules of the game—or a stalemate—when no one has won, they've fought themselves to exhaustion, and now you create a transitional government, power sharing, cut the cake. No one wins, no one loses in that, at least in the short term.

## *South Sudan*

### **John Young**



As I look to the concept of stabilization more and listen to the people who know an awful lot more about this than I do, what I am starting to see in some ways is that although this is being presented as a new theme, in many ways you can look at a lot of the development in Sudan, particularly during the peace processes, through the lens of this notion of stabilization.

The exception to this kind of security-stabilization orientation by donors in South Sudan was the commitment to democratization. But what we saw as the process unfolded, specifically with respect to the 2010 elections, was that the elections were, to put it mildly, deeply flawed. The approach of the international community to those failures of the election was basically to say, 'It doesn't really matter. We can go on. We are not going to let this flawed election disrupt the peace process'.

By saying that, by making this kind of analysis, they were really saying that democratization was not the goal of the peace process. The goal was this security kind of approach. So that was what they focused on. But at the end of the day, when we look back to what the specific objectives of the peace process were, we can see that it was basically a complete failure in its own terms.

But despite those very clear failures of the peace process leading up to the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, when the next conflict arose, this internal war in South Sudan, the international community went back to the very same peace process, very same structure, again done through IGAD, again done with the backing of the Troika of the United States, Britain and Norway, even led by the same mediator, General Lazarus Sumbeiywo, from Kenya. It's been very much the same kind of process and, thus far, the same focus on security: on reaching the cessation of hostilities and agreeing on conflict-monitoring groups. And both of those have formally been agreed to, but in fact the conflict itself still goes

on, and the monitoring mechanism has not taken form at all. So again, we see the same kind of thrust on security, on stabilization, and thus far the same kind of failures, as if nothing had been learned from the earlier peace process at all.

There's been an enormous expenditure of human and financial resources by all of these agencies, by the South Sudanese state, by the international community, on the provision of security in South Sudan, and the result, probably, is to increase the insecurity, and the agents themselves who have been involved in providing security have become drivers of insecurity.

### Anonymous

When I was in northern Bahr el-Ghazal in April last year, surveying the community perception of the UN mandate on the protection of civilians, they told me, 'What, the UN? No, we see them going from Gok Machar to Aweil, but what are they supposed to be doing again? They are supposed to be protecting us? Well, go tell them and let them come and talk to us, because we have ideas about how they can protect us'. Is it really rocket science for us to figure this out?

This is where I tend to agree with Graham Hancock, in his book *Lords of Poverty*, that the international community aid system is just a giant industry that is there to stay, to give people careers and to support them, but it is not making an impact at the local level.<sup>7</sup> Am I saying that we need to stop this assistance? No, absolutely not. I am in some ways the beneficiary of this dysfunctional international system. But I am saying let us do what makes sense.

### Anonymous

But also let me present the view of local people about the 2012 conflict in Jonglei. The international community is not being looked at favourably on the issue of what happened in Pibor county [rebellion between Yau Yau, the Murle militia leader, and the SPLA, starting in 2010]. The international community was too simplistic, in my view, by condemning what the government was doing and was never really critical of what Yau Yau and his armed militia groups have been doing to the population.

Every now and then, communities, counties that have nothing to do with the army, are being attacked, and nobody has said anything. What would you do if there was a situation where your property was being raided, even your children in some cases are



<sup>7</sup> Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Business*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989.



being taken, and people don't say anything about it? It seems to suggest that this is an acceptable practice. So there's a double standard, in the eyes of many South Sudanese, on this particular issue.

## 5. Stabilization, development and humanitarian intervention

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*There is very little debate on whether we should uphold humanitarian principles, whether humanitarian space is important, and whether people in need of life-saving assistance should get it or not. They're fairly comprehensively accepted as givens. To preserve that, humanitarian actors do try to uphold the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence. Generally we try to de-conflict or separate humanitarian work from stabilization work. It sounds simple, but while we can agree on the principles, upholding those alongside stabilization work is really complicated.*

— Joanna Nickolls

### Said Mohamed Dahir

Somalia, as you know, is a country where development and humanitarian projects were pouring in for the last number of decades, and there were various reasons why these interventions were implemented. One of the rationales was stabilization, whether it had that name or not.



### Anonymous

I do not see stabilization, if there is such a thing, as separate from development or humanitarian action. Stabilization is just a process that aims at ensuring that there is stability. These are tools or resources or capabilities that you use to enhance that. Have the development partners who have thought of this concept called stabilization been prioritizing development and humanitarian action? The answer is probably no.



You have the UN, both military and civilian, roaming around in Juba and across the country for the last eight years in their armoured vehicles, with a lot of air conditioning in those V8s, but with little to show on the ground. And we are just pouring in money, billions and billions and billions and billions. Then we keep asking ourselves, why is this not making an impact? Well, it is hollow. You are dumping things in a hole. And you want it to make an impact in what way?



### Rémy Kasindi

In 1994, we had our experience with the Rwandan refugees in the DRC. There were more than a million refugees who installed themselves in the east of the country. They were followed by humanitarian institutions. But the humanitarian action was neutralized by the devastation of the refugee camps by a military intervention, which caused an enormous catastrophe that one calls humanitarian and is a source of the problem we are living through in the east of the DRC.

### Joanna Nickolls

There are tensions when humanitarian aid is needed, or it becomes possible to deliver it, immediately following a military offensive. There's a concern that this then links the humanitarian work to the military work, and makes it less neutral.



### Philip Winter

Do not be foolish, do not deceive yourself. Go into a complex, conflicted environment with your eyes open, and you will have to swallow hard, perhaps, at some of the things that happen when you, as an outsider, go into somebody else's war, into their conflict zone, and start bringing in your people, your ideas, and your resources.



### Nickson Kambale

The actions taken by international institutions have to lead to stabilization and not the opposite. Actions in development have to be rooted in the sociopolitical realities of an area, and the institutions called on to implement these actions have to be able to question themselves on the basis of people's expectations and of the promises and aims they had made. For example, when STAREC was put into place in the eastern DRC, this was, amongst others, a response to the situation of all these populations displaced due to conflict, but this situation remains unaddressed and even manages to poison the relations between the states of the region.

### Loochi Muzaliwa

In the humanitarian world, the majority of actors are NGOs. It is, however difficult, I think, to envisage a migration from the humanitarian to development with NGOs. For example, we have seen that

in many countries, millions and millions of dollars have been given to NGOs to create employment and production units, but it has not really worked.

Take the case of the Congo. The humanitarian plan for 2014 numbers several million dollars. This will be dedicated largely to the purchase of food supplies, but there is a question here. Do we need the distribution of food supplies, or do we need seeds so that these communities can cultivate?

In the territory of Fizi, in southern South Kivu province, there is Lake Tanganyika, which is very rich in fish. Other countries, such as Zambia and Burundi, to some degree exploit it to their benefit. But on the Congolese side, if one suggests projects for industrial fishing to respond to the dietary needs of the communities, no donor steps up. They say, this we cannot support. If you look at the nature of the soil, the soil produces. But for a population which has lived in refugee camps for ten or twenty years, used to being given food handouts, when this population returns, the same practice continues. Maize flour is continuously distributed, while the soil on which the population is living is very productive.

So how in the donors' minds can we pass from humanitarian and external assistance to empowerment in terms of a formal economy based on industrialization and production capacity?

## Philip Winter

The international community thinks of a war zone as a place where people need food. But if you're on the ground in Southern Sudan during a war—as unfortunately many are now—do you really want unground maize? I talked to Nuer mothers who asked me, 'What do you expect me to do with this? I have no grinding stones in Upper Nile, which is made of mud and water and grass. I can't grind this stuff. If I boil it up, my children can't digest it. What are you doing?'

We put large amounts of food aid into South Sudan during the war. We bombed South Sudan, literally, with unground maize. Yet, the natural resources of South Sudan are sufficient that the people know how to stay alive. This is not a desert. This is a well-watered land of grass and fish and trees and wildlife. And people can survive.

If you put food into a war zone, soldiers will eat it. I remember attending workshops and meetings where this would be discussed, and donors would say how worried they were about the effect of



the relief operation feeding the soldiers, and I would be deliberately a bit provocative and say, 'Excuse me. We've heard about "rights-based programming". Soldiers have rights, too. Are you going to tell me that soldiers can't eat food that comes into South Sudan from the international community? Why? If you don't accept that soldiers will take some portion of this food, you know very well that they will just take it anyway'.

### Hugo de Vries



One of the problems we had in the first stage of the I4S was the dilution of stabilization by comparing it with development, with the government and some agencies saying, 'We do economic development, and that will lead to stabilization, because people will have jobs'. But that is not necessarily the same thing.

### Anonymous



South Sudan is the world's newest country. The only paved road we have is the one that connects Juba, the capital city, with the southern town at the border with Uganda, called Nimule, that was constructed thanks to money from the US government. That is the only paved road we have in South Sudan. A distance of 190 km or 192 km. That is the only thing we have. For that road, if there were to be an insecurity in Nimule that would need the government to deploy forces in the area, those would get there very easily, without any problem. If the government is required to deploy forces in Bor, which is the capital of Jonglei state, the government may take days to get forces there to respond. That answers the question we are asking here at the conference. If stability involves the use of force to respond to a physical threat, then development gives you that answer in the form of a road.

### Anonymous

If you do development, whatever it is, in a conflict setting, you have to do conflict-sensitive planning. Now I don't understand, after two days here, how that is any different from a stabilization logic. Of course you will have to take into account the impact of your interventions on conflict. Of course conflict prevention will be one of the priorities. So I really don't see it.

We had this discussion very early on. Some programmes may have a label of stabilization. That doesn't automatically mean very

much. Other programmes don't have that label because the money comes from a different track. That doesn't even necessarily mean operationally they are more or less flexible. You have instruments in both camps. This was my question to the panel, but maybe now it's a response: I still fail to see the traction that the concept is meant to give us, either in terms of operational precision or in any other way.

## 6. Legitimacy and corruption at the local level

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*I spent months trying to listen to communities in the Kivus about what they thought about the Congolese military and armed groups. I found it extremely difficult to say when, where, and why people find power holders legitimate or not.*

— Judith Verweijen

### Joanna Nickolls

From a development perspective, there is a lot of vigorous debate [in Somalia] over whether capacity-building and support to administrations can or should start before we have confidence that that administration is regarded as legitimate. If legitimacy does matter, development actors need to know a lot more than we usually do about what legitimacy means to the population in areas that we are working in.

Should the local people be involved in choosing their own administrations? Does that mean that capacity development is relevant? What about elders and chiefs? What if a federal government selects an administration and puts it into an area? It might be easy to argue that we should rush in and support new administrations. From a development perspective, there's an argument that it should be more phased and more conditional.

### Loochi Muzaliwa



We want to stabilise the communities, but without the communities. This means that we do it for them, but not with them. An African military [AU peacekeeper] deployed in Somalia apparently receives USD 2,000 [a month], while a Somali soldier called to stabilize the country receives less than USD 100. And in the end, we say it is not our affair. It is up to your government, the same government that is too weak and that we pretend to stabilize and strengthen.

### Joanna Nickolls

There is a question of whether stabilization programmes lend support to an administration that's considered legitimate by the

international community or whether it's considered legitimate by the local people. A development perspective would be more about building social appetite and demand for good governance.

### Anonymous

There is corruption in Somalia, not because Somalis have a propensity for stealing stuff, but because there is an absence of institutions. You know, the last five Somali prime ministers were American and Canadian, Somalis who have PhDs and who are teaching at universities in the US. So I have the impression that whoever goes and works in Somalia is just going there for the money and to build houses in the United Arab Emirates or Malaysia.

For someone who has worked for the Somali government, I honestly don't remember the US government or UK or China or Sweden or Norway giving money to the Somali government. Maybe they pay the salaries of Somali soldiers, or maybe they sponsor the African Union forces. The first government I know that has come to the Somali government, who brought 30 million, was Norway, and they controlled their money. So I think we need to really look at the facts on the ground. The US has never given cash to the Somali government, nor has Canada or China or Japan. I think we should be a bit fair to the people who work all their lives on the ground trying to fix and better the country.



### Emily Paddon

To return to the case of MONUC/MONUSCO and the deployment of the intervention brigade [in DRC]. Is the mission going to be able to neutralize armed groups and undertake offensive operations one day, and then the next day foster democratic dialogue amongst communities, particularly in communities where some of those armed groups have legitimacy and are accepted in the absence of an accountable state?



### Hugo de Vries

Are we [MONUSCO] still able to be an honest, apolitical broker with this sort of militarization? No, but I am not entirely sure people expect that of MONUSCO so much. There are huge expectations that have been raised. MONUSCO has been very unpopular in Congo in the last couple of years. The main expectation from both the government, and from the population actually, is to




support military operations. It is complicated. MONUSCO is stuck in that momentum now as well. They are supposed to do military operations, the pressure is there, but it is creating not only a lot of problems for the honest broker function, but also internally.

### Joanna Nickolls


If we don't have confidence that a government automatically wants stabilization, to what extent should we intervene? If we don't believe it's in the interests of the powerful elite to bring peace, can we bring it to them without them wanting it? I would say no, and perhaps the argument is that we should focus on building the social consensus around peace and then move on to the activities that we think will deliver it.

### Anonymous



In South Sudan before the crisis, we had our own 'New Compact Deal'. You [Joanna Nickolls] talk about an initiative like that being an endeavour to ensure that there's national ownership. Well, maybe you don't know the particular issues in South Sudan, but I kept hearing about it, but nobody came to ask my view even though I was in Juba. So how is it supposed to be a 'national initiative' if it forced upon us national ownership—an ownership decided outside the shores of the country. Whose ownership is it really? Whose 'national'? National from where it originates or from where it is being given?

### Abdirashid Hashi



In Somalia, and this is a bit ironic, especially in Mogadishu when it comes to property rights, it became an agreed belief that anybody who has a documented title for a property from the Siad Barre government [in power until 1991], everybody considers this a valid and legal document. If the owners of property in Mogadishu could produce these title deeds, then we assumed that this would make it easy to sort out who owns what, and there should not be too many problems.

But when we looked into the situation of Mogadishu, and we talked to people, went to the court and went to the district, and we did the research, we realized that things are really complicated and that there are huge amounts of disputes over properties and land. When the civil war erupted, a lot of Somalis who were in

Mogadishu left the city, and others took over their properties and were using it as theirs for maybe ten or 20 years. Now, Mogadishu is getting a little bit of peace, but the owners of these properties are coming back, and it creates problems between the occupants and those who had those properties.

Some people come up with forged title deeds. Because of the war, most of the registries and databases of who owns what and when have been destroyed. Actually, there is only one guy in Sweden who has the land register for Mogadishu. So if I want to buy a property, for example, we contact him, and then he verifies who owns what.

Because of the volatility, we have also seen a lot of people just making a claim to a property. Although they don't own anything, there is a chance that they will get something. Even if you just make the claim or occupy the property, then you may get a fee as caretaker of the property, just to get you by.

We think the international community can play a role to mitigate and to contribute to stabilization through helping the courts, because they are extremely corrupted and weak. One way they could help is to support the judiciary so that people can go through the courts, and they can get a fair adjudication. Another area is strengthening the local mechanisms that help to address these issues at the local level, whether it is the traditional elders or whoever.

## Anonymous

There is a programme in South Sudan trying to create what is known as a mobile court system. What this programme wants to do is to take judges and lawyers from the centre and move them around the country. In the best case, they would be sitting in one place for two weeks, or maybe several months, and then come back. Is that an efficient way of making sure that justice is made accessible to the people?

Would it not make sense to design a project therefore that targets the chiefs, wherever they are across the country and actually incorporate them into the judiciary? Since 80% of the cases go to them, or more, why do we need judges to move around? How expensive is it for these judges to be moved around considering the fact that you have to fly them in, accommodate them?

Some of them will be taken from Central Equatoria, which is different from Jonglei culturally, and the way the traditional



mechanisms work and wisdom would not be understood by these people. It is just like taking someone from Kenya to South Sudan and giving them the responsibility to adjudicate on issues that they do not understand.

### **Fred Ngoga**

When you've been in a place for a while, you tend to think you know what's good for the country. But no one knows better than the people of that country. The copy and paste models don't work. And you can't claim to want to help people and yet not empower them. You need to give them the chance to determine what is good for them.

## Conclusions

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*All crises are local.*

—Stuart Gordon

### Ken Menkhaus

Weak institutions are critical bottlenecks to stabilization. To put it another way: no institutions, no stabilization. Institution-building takes a long time. But not 500 years. The *World Development Report* says 27.<sup>8</sup> I'll go along with that. It's a reminder that, for all the tools that we have, stabilization generally across the board is still a series of blunt instruments in a context where we'd like surgical tools.

There is a specific subset of unintended consequences that kept coming up in our discussions, a problem that philosophers call 'moral hazard'—an action that is meant to address a problem inadvertently incentivizes the behaviour that causes the problem in the first place. Stabilization is replete with these dilemmas. We don't want to reward bad behaviour, and yet we want to get some of these guys to the table.

### Joanna Nickolls

I don't think we should be doing more education on stabilization. I think we should be doing more listening and less talking, hearing what it is that people need and trying to deliver on that rather than superimposing what we think something means.

### Ken Menkhaus

Note that the last four letters '-tion' in a word in English and in French have the same meaning: a process. Stabilization implies a transitional process from one thing to another, from unstable to stable. One of the conventional wisdoms is that in fact, first and foremost, stabilization is about a transitional process.

What are the implications of that? Is stabilization doomed to fail? I don't think so. What I think it does is invite us to think about

<sup>8</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*.

stabilization differently, with a focus on the idea of a long transition and the need for stabilization via a strategy of long transition.

### Judith Verweijen

We should realize that everything is inherently political. Clausewitz said, ‘War is the continuation of politics by other means’,<sup>9</sup> whereas Foucault in a book appropriately called *Il faut défendre la société*, said, ‘Politics is the continuation of war by other means’.<sup>10</sup> Keeping that in mind, it’s undeniable that every decision we make has an impact on the distribution of power and resources and that every decision is also a product of the distribution of resources—not only on the recipient side but also on the so-called intervention side.

### Ken Menkhaus

We have got strategies for a completely failed state. Locals build coping mechanisms of all sorts, informal mechanisms of order, and livelihoods. They can work it out without a state. International actors know how to work with completely failed states. We also have strategies for stable states. But what about that place in between? What about that 27-to-500-year period of transition from an unstable to a stable place? Can we come up with transitional strategies? Can stabilization as a concept at least start to inform our strategies in places like South Sudan, Congo, and Somalia?

A transitional strategy informed by stabilization would address questions like this: how do we as humanitarian actors simultaneously work around a weak and dysfunctional state to save lives, which is a humanitarian imperative, while finding ways to build up the capacity and legitimacy of that state? Can we do both or is this mutually exclusive?

As development agencies working on state-building and rule of law, how can we protect local political coping mechanisms, local systems of informal justice, rule of law, and security at the same time that we build a formal judiciary without undermining that thing that local people depend on for their only source of rule of law?

For those working on counter-insurgency, how can we effectively work with local partners whom we absolutely need in order to win the counter-insurgency while simultaneously building up the capacity of weak and perhaps venal and corrupt government security forces?

9 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege* [On war], 3 vols., Berlin, 1834.

10 Michel Foucault, ‘*Society Must Be Defended*’: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, trans. David Macey, New York: Picador, 2003.

How can we do all of this, build institutions over this long-term period, without sacrificing the needs and interests of an entire generation of people who are waiting for stabilization to actually succeed? That to me is the big question that we have asked. The notion of a long transition and the need for a strategy—and I think, as a reminder of transition and the importance that it plays in our approaches to these local conflicts—indicates stabilization has something to offer.

### **Sagal Sheikh Ali**

When I go back to Somalia, I will have a different lens on what stabilization means. I will be able to put into perspective the things that I have seen there, and how they destabilize the political and security situations, and also how they can contribute to stabilizing them. Stabilization is a process that either cannot end or does not have any sort of middle ground, but because of that, you are able to see that process continuously. You can see whether it develops in a positive light and also whether it has any sort of negative impact on the situations we are in.

## Glossary of acronyms, words and phrases

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AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia; African Union peace enforcement mission approved by the UN and operating in Somalia since 2007
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, a major donor of international aid
FARDC	Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo/Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; created during the political transition after the end of the Second Congo War (2003–2006) and consisting of former rebel and government forces
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development; regional cooperation body established in 1996 and based in Djibouti that aims to increase development, security and trade; members are Djibouti, Eritrea (membership suspended), Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda
Inga Dams / Inga III	Dams located on the cataracts of the Congo River in the DRC, 225 km west of Kinshasa; two currently functioning at low capacity—Inga I, built in 1972, and Inga II, built in 1982; new government plan proposed for the Grand Inga, the world's largest hydropower project, the first step being to construct Inga III
Islands of stability	A concept MONUSCO adopted with the overall objective of preventing an immediate relapse of communities into a cycle of violence after the national army

or UN forces have cleared an area in the eastern DRC of armed groups.

ISSSS / I4S	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy; a UN-led strategy initiated during 2008–2009 in the eastern provinces of the DRC to support the Congolese government in its efforts to build up and maintain its presence in areas from which armed groups had been cleared; second phase launched in December 2013
JNA	Joint needs assessment; see RDP
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army. A cult movement founded by Joseph Kony in 1988 that remains active, if heavily weakened, in the borderlands of the Central African Republic and the DRC
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; peacekeeping mission created by the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999; replaced by MONUSCO in 2010
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; replaced MONUC in 2010; second-largest UN peacekeeping mission with 19,000 blue helmets; reinforced in 2013 by the 3,000-strong UN Force Intervention Brigade with the mandate to track down and disarm armed groups
Al-Shabaab	An extremist Islamic movement that emerged in Somalia after the fall of the Islamic Courts Union in late 2006
Somali New Deal Compact	A framework agreed in 2013 by the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community, that builds on the principles of the 2011 Busan New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. With commonly agreed statebuilding and



peacebuilding goals it aims to improve the alignment of international assistance with Somalia's own national peace-building and state-building priorities and to enshrine the principle of mutual accountability for delivery of the commitments made by Somalia and its development partners.

RDP	Somali Reconstruction and Development Programme. A national development plan for 2008–2012 coordinated by the UN and World Bank, resulting from a 2005–2007 Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) requested by the then Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.
SSR	Security sector reform. A process reforming or re-establishing state security forces in countries emerging from conflict. It commonly involves the army, the police, and the security services, as well as the judiciary
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas; the DRC's national plan launched in 2009 to re-establish state authority in the eastern parts of the country; first phase of I4S designed to support STAREC's implementation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia: A UN mission established in April 1992 to provide humanitarian relief. It was augmented by the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in December 1992, which added a military component to protect relief missions, and was relaunched in March 1993 with a peace-enforcement mandate as UNOSOM II.

## Speaker biographies

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**Abdirashid Hashi** is the director of the Mogadishu-based Heritage Institute for Political Studies. Until December 2012, he was the Horn of Africa analyst with the International Crisis Group, focusing on Somalia. He has also served in the Ethiopian government as deputy chief of staff in the Prime Minister's Office, secretary to the Council of Ministers, communications director for the Presidency, adviser to the prime minister, and cabinet minister responsible for public works and reconstruction.

**Anna Schmidt** works for the European Union as a governance and security adviser for Somalia. Previously she was a fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Schmidt has worked and researched extensively in conflict and post-conflict settings across sub-Saharan Africa. She was Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. She has published on aid coordination in Somalia, elections and conflict in Africa, and on civilian and refugee protection and aid architecture. Anna holds a PhD in political science from the University of California at Berkeley.

**Edward Rackley** is an independent consultant with more than 25 years of experience in the design, management and evaluation of relief and recovery programmes across the Great Lakes; youth programming and communications; child disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); and human rights monitoring and reporting. Amongst others, he advised Abbé Malu Malu during the Amani peace process in the DRC and provided technical oversight to DFID's Security Sector Accountability and Police Reform. Edward holds a PhD in philosophy from the New School for Social Research, New York.

**Emmanuel Kabengele Kalonji** is National Coordinator of the *Réseau pour la Reforme du Secteur de Sécurité et de Justice* (RRSSJ). He was successively National Coordinator of the Network of Civil Society for the Security Sector Reform, former Participant First French program of Transitional Justice in Rabat, Executive Director of the Research Center for Human Rights Training, First

Vice President of the Civil Society of Kasai Oriental, Member of the Board of Directors of the National Network of NGOs on Human Rights in the DRC and winner of the 'Harubuntu 2009' prize. He holds a degree in Law from the University of Mbuji-Mayi.

**Emily Paddon** is a European Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. Her research focuses on the politics and practices of UN peacekeeping, humanitarianism, and military intervention with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. She is the former Rose Research Fellow in International Relations at the University of Oxford and co-founder of the Oxford Central Africa Forum (OCAF). Her PhD is from the University of Oxford, where she was a Trudeau Scholar. She is the author of the forthcoming book entitled *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations* (2016).

**Fred Gateretse-Ngoga** is a Burundian ambassador and head of the conflict prevention and early warning division at the AU Commission. Prior to joining the division, he served as a senior officer with the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) where he assisted in providing support on Counter Terrorism and in the planning of military operations in line with AMISOM's mandate. Fred studied in France and in the US where he attended the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and Suffolk University. On 16 April 2014, he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Burundi.

**Geoffrey Lou Duke** is programme director at the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms, where he oversees the design and implementation of programmes and conducts research on small arms, community security, and security sector reform.

**Hugo de Vries** worked in Goma and Bukavu with MONUSCO's Stabilization Support Unit between 2010 and 2013. He is currently a consultant with the World Bank. He previously worked for the Dutch Defence Staff, for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a policy officer for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and small arms and light weapons, and at the Clingendael Institute in The Hague as a research fellow.

**Jan Bachmann** is a lecturer in peace and development research at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg. His

research interests are on the intersection of security and development policies in relation to sub-Saharan Africa. He is now involved in a research project on the role of infrastructure in Western state building missions in Eastern and Central Africa. Jan holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Bristol. Jan was a co-organizer of this conference.

**Joanna Nickolls** currently works for the Executive Office of the Secretary General (EOSG). She was head of the 2014–2015 Ebola response team and Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy at the UN. She was head of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office in Somalia for five years. Joanna has also worked for the UN in Afghanistan as a Special Assistant to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General. Joanna has a Masters degree in Economics from Cambridge University.

**John Young** has been involved in research on peace, security, governance, federalism, conflict, elections, and political parties in the Horn of Africa since 1986. In recent years, he has had a particular interest in peace and security issues in Sudan. He has worked as an independent and UN journalist, academic researcher, Canadian government consultant, peace monitor in the Sudan conflict, evaluator of various peace support programmes, and political adviser for the April 2010 national elections and Southern Sudan referendum. John is the author of *The Fate of Sudan: The Origins and Consequences of a Flawed Peace Process* (2012).

**Judith Verweijen** is a researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, and the Conflict Research Group at Ghent University, Belgium. She specializes in the internal workings of state and non-state armed forces and civilian–military interaction in the eastern DRC, where she has conducted regular field research since 2010. At present, Judith is the lead researcher on the second phase of RVI’s Usalama Project, which examines armed groups and their influence on governance in the eastern DRC. She holds a PhD from Utrecht University.

**Ken Menkhaus** is Professor and Chair of the Political Science Department at Davidson College, where he has taught since 1991. He specializes in the Horn of Africa, focusing on development, conflict analysis, peace-building, humanitarian responses, and political Islam. He is the author of over 50 articles, book chapters,

and reports, including *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism* (2004). He is a Senior Research Advisor to the Enough Project and a Fellow of the Rift Valley Institute.

**Loochi Muzaliwa** is a journalist and programme coordinator at the Life and Peace Institute in the DRC. He is a lawyer and specialist in conflicts transformation, particularly in the eastern DRC, where he also conducts research on the dynamics of land conflicts.

**Mvemba Dizolele** is a writer, foreign policy analyst, and independent journalist. He is also the Peter J. Duignan Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is the author of the forthcoming biography *Mobutu: The Rise and Fall of the Leopard King*.

**Nickson Kambale** is director of the Kinshasa-based Centre pour la Gouvernance, a research organization conducting studies on conflict throughout the DRC. He is a member of the working group of the civil society on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement and researcher with the Congo Research Group. Nickson is also a lawyer in Kinshasa.

**Peer Schouten** is a researcher at the Danish Institute for International Affairs, editor-in-chief of *Theory Talks*, and works on the intersections of transnational governance and local conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. He has frequently consulted for NGOs on security governance, transnational corporations, and mineral resource extraction in sub-Saharan Africa with a particular focus on the Great Lakes Region. He holds a PhD from the University of Gothenburg on private security companies in the DRC and has lectured frequently at the National University of Rwanda. Peer was a co-organizer of this conference.

**Philip Winter** has been based in Africa since 1976, originally as General Manager of Juba Boatyard. During the second Sudanese civil war, he set up and ran the Save the Children Fund programme under Operation Lifeline Sudan. From 2008–2009, he was seconded by the UK's Stabilization Unit to MONUC in the DRC. From 2010–14, he was the Juba representative of Independent Diplomat. Philip was also chief of staff to former Botswanan president Masire for the years of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, his account of which was published as *A Sacred Cause* in 2012. In

2005, he was awarded an OBE ‘for services to conflict resolution in Africa’. He is a founding fellow of the Rift Valley Institute.

**Rémy Kasindi** is the founder and research director of the Bukavu-based *Centres de recherches et d'études stratégiques en Afrique centrale* (CRESA). He has previously worked for Chemonics International and as a coordinator for International Relief and Development. He is a human rights activist who specializes on the mining sector in the eastern DRC.

**Sagal Sheikh-Ali** works as a project coordinator for the Somali Women Development Centre in Mogadishu. Her main project was UNICEF’s ‘Psychosocial support for women and children affected by Gender-Based Violence and armed conflict in the Benadir region’. Sagal has also been working alongside UNSOM to facilitate workshops with non-state actors in discussing issues such as the redrafting of the constitution and how federalism can be implemented in Somalia. She has a degree in Accounting and Finance from Middlesex University in London and has completed her chartered accountants certificate with ACCA.

**Said Mohamed Dahir** has been working in Somaliland, supporting local institutions in many different capacities for over twelve years. Previously a lecturer at Amoud University in Somaliland, Said has worked as a researcher with several different organizations and with international scholars. Having worked with RVI since 2013 as a consultant researcher, he joined the RVI team as Research Manager in January 2015.

**Stuart Gordon** teaches in the Department of International Development at the LSE. He co-authored the *Helmand Road Map*, the UK’s diplomatic and military strategy for Afghanistan, and the strategy paper for the UK’s Helmand stabilization plan for 2011–14. Stuart has also served as the deputy commander of the UK MOD’s Military Stabilization Support Group. He has conducted field research and programme consultancies in many countries including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. Gordon specializes in the politics of conflict and development and has written on various aspects of stabilization, securitization of development and governance programmes, peacekeeping, and peace-building.

**William Deng Deng** has served as chairperson of South Sudan's National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission since 2009. After fleeing Sudan, he received refugee status in Canada. William worked with the UN and returning refugees in Rwanda to implement environmental rehabilitation and helped negotiate with and reintegrate rebel fighters into society. He holds a BA and a master's degree from York University.

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**'THE CONFERENCE HAS PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE WHAT STABILIZATION MEANS IN SOUTH SUDAN AS OPPOSED TO WHAT IT MEANS IN SOMALIA AND IN THE DRC. AND PUTTING MY OWN INSIGHTS ON STABILIZATION ALONGSIDE THOSE OF THE SPEAKERS HERE HAS GIVEN ME A DIFFERENT LENS THROUGH WHICH TO UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE EVENTS IN SOMALIA.'**

*—Sagal Sheikh Ali, Somali Women Development Center*

**'WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND STABILIZATION AS A PROCESS THAT IS GROUNDED IN LOCAL CONTEXTS AND ACHIEVED OVER TIME.'**

*—Zacharia Diing Akol, Sudd Institute*

**'WHAT PEOPLE ARE CALLING FOR IS THEIR OWN SOLUTION TO THEIR CRISIS, BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND THEIR CRISIS BETTER. PEOPLE ACROSS THESE REGIONS ARE READY TO ASSERT THEIR OWN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, AND THIS IS REALLY KEY.'**

*—Mvemba Dizolele, Professorial Lecturer of African Studies,  
Johns Hopkins University SAIS*

In March 2014, the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), through the Rift Valley Forum, together with the University of Gothenburg convened a regional conference on stabilization at the Kenya School of Government in Nairobi. The conference attracted some ninety participants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia and South Sudan—people involved in civil society, government, the UN and the donor and diplomatic communities. Academics and specialists from Europe and North America also participated. The objective of the two-day conference was to question, review, evaluate and exchange lessons on stabilization programmes in the DRC, Somalia and South Sudan with the aim of informing policies that enhance peace and security in eastern and central Africa. This report presents highlights from this gathering and in no way aims to reproduce the debates and their conclusions in full. Giving space to voices from countries that are subject to stabilization programmes is central to this report. Their statements, explanations and clarifications are complemented here by those of regional and international specialists and experienced practitioners in international aid, development and stabilization.



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